

**Above:** Greater downtown Avery sprawls before the photographer in this 1971 view looking westward. The depot is at left, the crew bunk house in the center and the famed Hotel Idaho at right. Today, the hotel and part of the bunkhouse are gone.—MIKE SCHAFER

**Below:** Little Joe E21 on what appears to be an eastbound Extra curves past the east yard on the morning of June 1, 1973. The "St. Joe & Eastern" logging spur bridge over the St. Joe River is plainly evident.—GEORGE HORNA, ED LYNCH COLLECTION

handled by the Hotel Idaho. The bunkhouse, Beanery and hotel were for a time all run by the Interstate Corporation out of the Twin Cities. The Beanery was often staffed by transients in need of work.

Avery in 1910, with a population of 250, was nearly destroyed by the fire of Aug. 20–22 which swept through thousands of acres of timber—timber that would never be turned into railroad revenue as had been planned. Avery residents started "back fires" at the town's edge (burning away a band of land that, stripped of burnable material, would serve as a barrier to the oncoming forest fire), thus saving it from destruction. Residents nonetheless sought refuge from flames in nearby railroad tunnels.

The first ice house in Avery was built in 1910, and in 1913 an ice house was built for refrigerated cars. Work on the electrification of the Rocky Mountain Division began in 1914. The Avery substation (No. 14) became the largest building in town when it was completed in 1915, and electrification in Idaho was ready in 1916. With three 1,500-kilowatt motor-generator sets, the Avery substation had a capacity of 4,500 kilowatts. The first two houses adjacent to the substation received electric power the



**Above:** Train 261 has arrived from Chicago on the afternoon of May 30, 1973, and shortly the Little Joe will be pulled from the train and sent to the engine facility for servicing before its next trip east. Four days later after this shot was taken, aerial photographer Robert McCoy, working for the railroad under contract, would fly over Avery and record the views shown on the following pages.—GEORGE HORNA, ED LYNCH COLLECTION

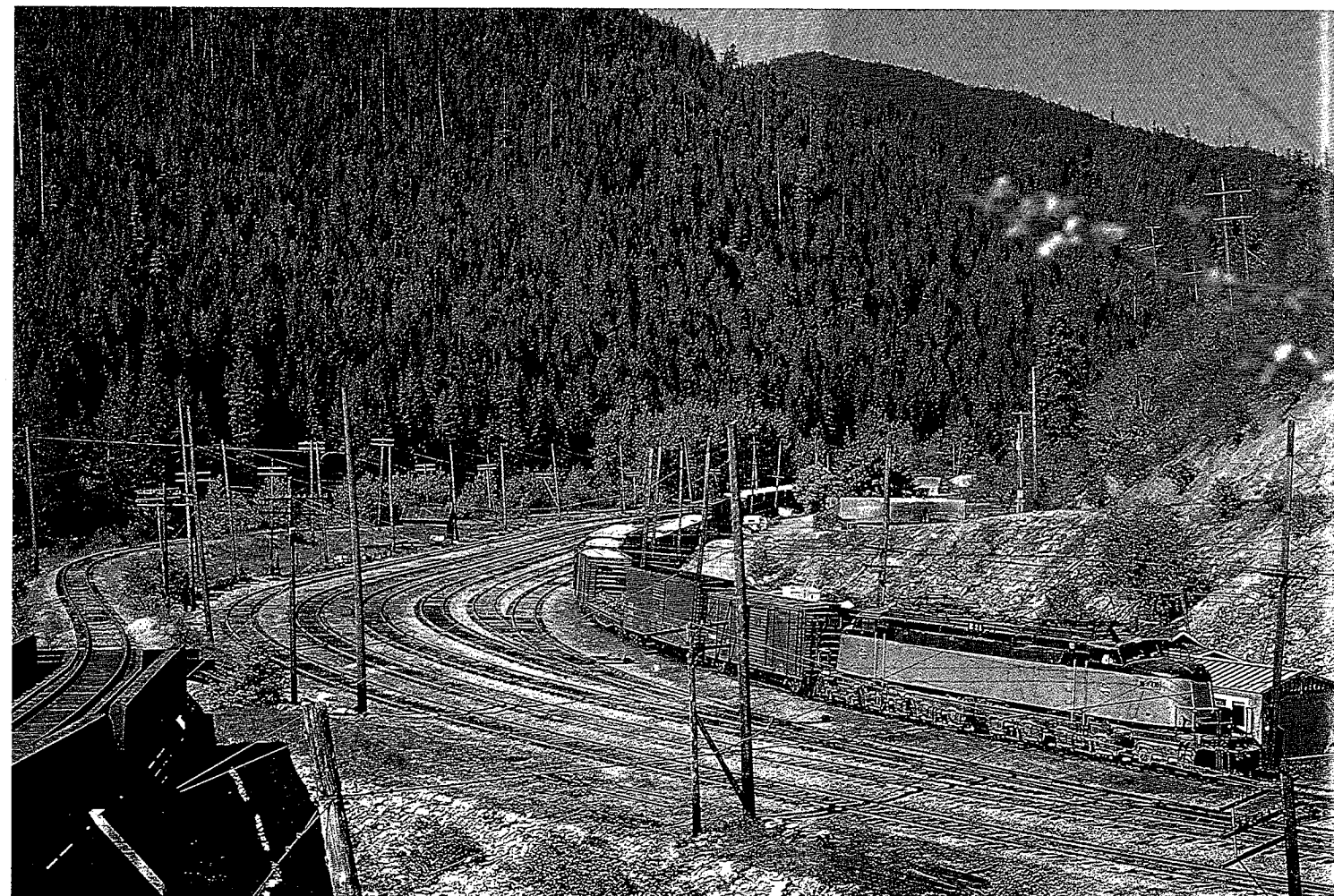
next year, but not until 1928 was the entire town of Avery electrified. The first road was built into Avery in 1930, the year the *Columbian* was discontinued. In 1935, the first concrete bridge across the St. Joe River at Avery was built.

Avery's trackage consisted of two yards, the west yard and the larger east yard. The east yard was on a broad curve, with the depot, substation and park on the inside curve along the main line; the St. Joe River was on the outside of the curve.

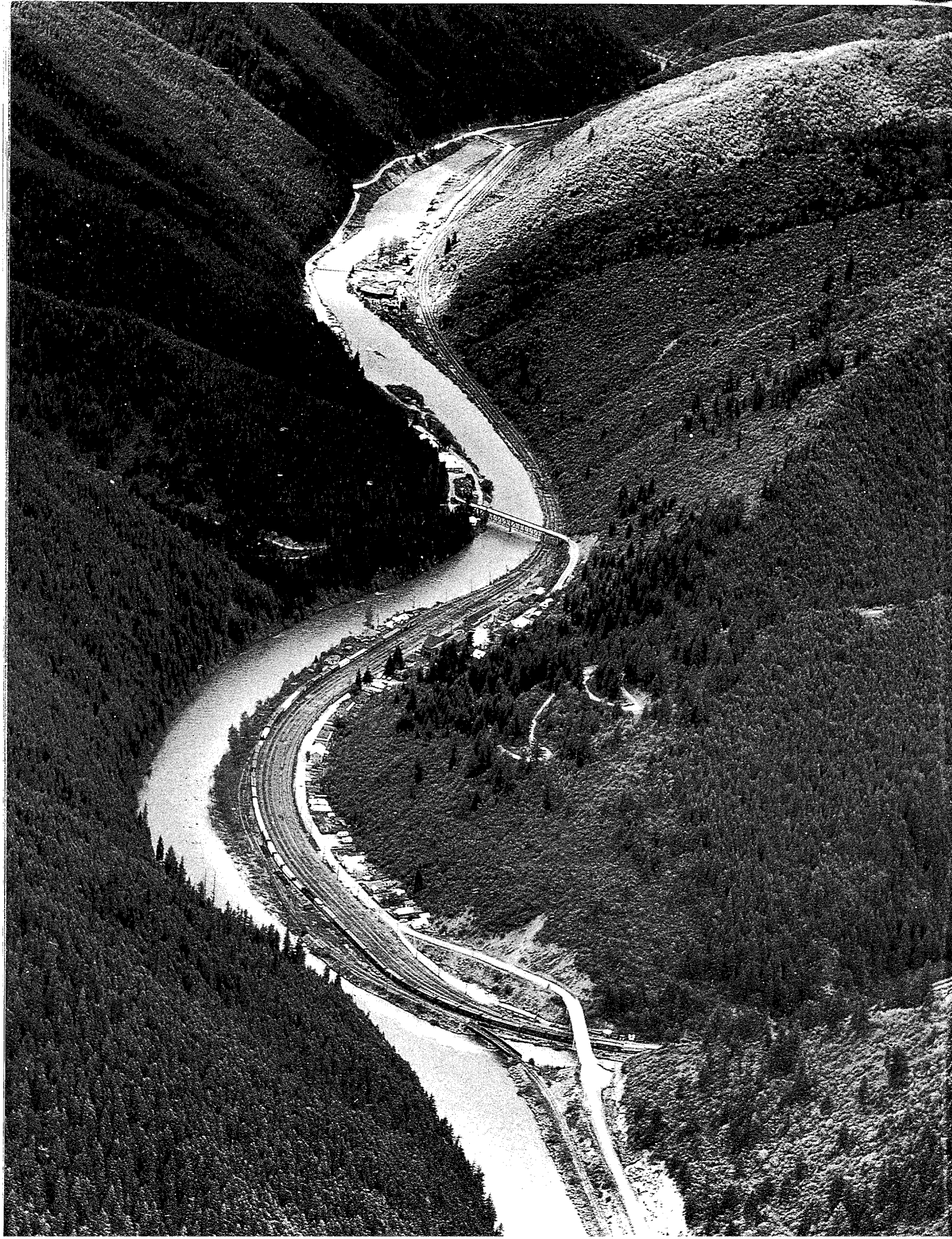
Track 1 separated from the main line a short distance up the North Fork canyon and then branched off into yard tracks 2 through 6. The main and tracks 2 and 3 were electrified, along with track 6 which was farther west and branched off into track 7, also electrified and serving as a runaround. A spur off of track 6 led to the ice house and a logging spur. Most but not all tracks were electrified; those that weren't were switched



A cement pond stocked with trout provided an unusual highlight to the depot grounds at Avery. On a September day in 1971, railroaders kibitz during 261's crew change as one crewmember, under the shade of a tree, soaks in the ambiance of a fading era.—MIKE SCHAFER

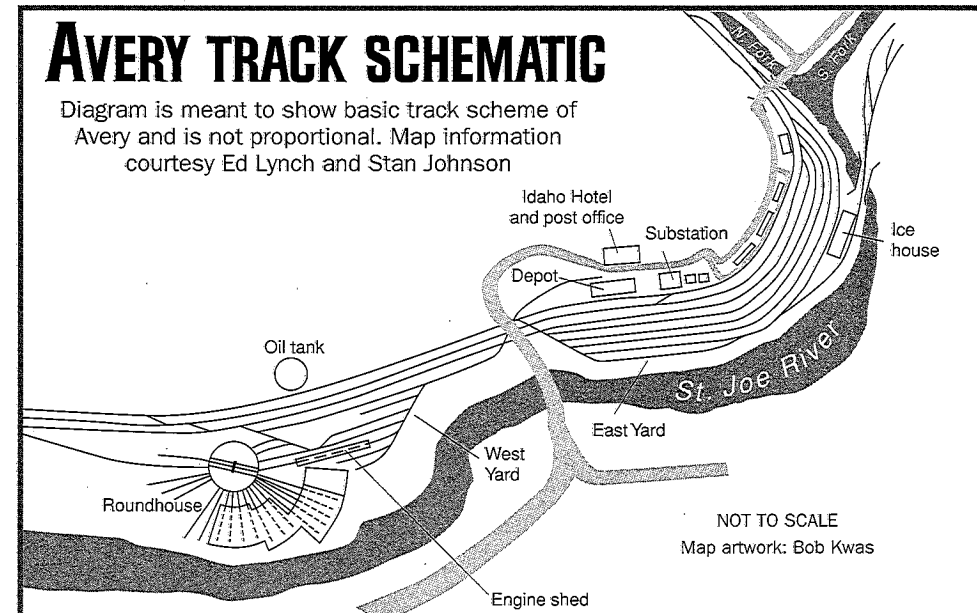






## AVERY TRACK SCHEMATIC

Diagram is meant to show basic track scheme of Avery and is not proportional. Map information courtesy Ed Lynch and Stan Johnson



*Below: The engine terminal and west yard comprised the west end of Milwaukee's Avery complex, which was somewhat isolated from the main part of Avery. To travel by vehicle between the depot/substation area and the engine terminal required two trips across the St. Joe River. This view looks eastward on June 3, 1973.—ROBERT T. MCCOY, NATE MOLLDREM COLLECTION*

↑ To Avery depot area

by steam or diesel, or by electric locomotives utilizing a long "handle" of cars to reach and switch cars that needed to be moved.

Why a yard at Avery, where only a negligible amount of traffic originated or terminated? The tonnage that could be handled by trains moving over St. Paul Pass was less than those operating west of Avery, so train size often had to be adjusted at Avery yard. Some reblocking occurred at the yards. For example, if chemical cars out of Tacoma bound for Missoula were buried within the train, they had to be moved to a block at the head end for easy set out at Missoula. Empty auto racks and TOFC trailers had to be moved to the rear third of trains heading over the mountain to reduce the chances of de-

*Text continued on page 32*

**Facing page:** Nearly all of what made up Milwaukee Road's Avery is visible in this westward view from Robert T. McCoy's plane on June 3, 1973. Toward the top of the photo is the west yard, with the roundhouse near the middle. The gravel road from St. Maries, Idaho, is at the top of the photo, and follows the south bank of the St. Joe River. As it nears Avery proper, it crosses the river into town on a bridge that has long been a favorite spot for photographers. The depot, a portion of the substation and various other buildings comprise "downtown" Avery just east of the river bridge and overpass. The logging spur toward the bottom of the photo crosses the North Fork of the St. Joe River right where it meets the South Fork.—ROBERT T. MCCOY, NATE MOLLDREM COLLECTION

